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NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

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ART. I.—*The American Annual Register for the Years 1827–8–9, or the Fifty-second and Fifty-third Years of American Independence.* New York. E. & G. W. Blunt. 1830.

We have, on former occasions, recommended the two first volumes of the *American Annual Register*, in terms decisive of our opinion of the plan and execution of the work. In its plan, we scarce know a work capable of being rendered more valuable, in the whole class of literature to which it belongs. The reader has only to consider how important a series of volumes an *American Annual Register* would be, commencing with the settlement of the country, or even with the revolution, in order to form an opinion of the claims of this publication to general patronage. For want of a contemporary record, like that which is furnished by these volumes, not a little of our history is irretrievably lost. The materials for it, if they exist at all, are dispersed throughout newspapers, magazines, and congressional documents, which it is in vain, after the lapse of a few years, to attempt to collect. A single volume, like one of those before us, relating to any period now considerably remote, would contain probably more information than the antiquary would be able to collect by years of study. It is not extravagant to anticipate, that, from the time when the publication of the *English Annual Register* commenced, the history of modern Europe will be written with much greater facility, as well as in much wider comprehension, than before. And what that work has accomplished for British history in particular, and the history of all other countries as far as they are in-

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cluded in its plan, will of course be accomplished for American history, by a work, which shall appropriately sustain the character of an *American Annual Register*.

But it is not enough to say, that these works will be useful to posterity. It can hardly be expected of any generation to support expensive works solely for the benefit of their successors. We remark, therefore, farther, that publications of this class, judiciously executed, are of great immediate utility. Their object is, at the end of a year, to present the public with the substance of the year's events. It is possible, indeed, in reference to occurrences of great interest, that the reading of the newspapers from day to day will leave upon the mind, at the end of the year, a distinct and accurate impression of what has happened. Of such events as Napoleon's invasion of Russia, and perhaps the emancipation of the Catholics, or the election of General Jackson, and of the main incidents connected with these events, the knowledge derived from the daily journals is as clear and correct as is required. Great single incidents of course attract the notice and dwell on the memory. But let any person, even the most assiduous reader of newspapers, endeavor, at the end of the year, to go over, in his own mind, the political history of Great Britain, or of France, of Columbia, or of Mexico, or even of the United States, and he will find how general and vague his recollection is. He will find himself alternately embarrassed by the redundancy and the want of facts. Many things, recorded at the time as 'important news,' are of no permanent interest; and many things, that are of considerable consequence, escape even a vigilant attention. To give a summary then of the political history of the year, in which what is merely superfluous detail shall be omitted, and the main events shall be continuously narrated, is the duty of the *Annual Register*; and a duty, which cannot be discharged without essential benefit to the politician and general reader.

We have already expressed a favorable opinion of the manner in which the former volumes of the *American Annual Register* have been executed. The present volume we consider quite equal to either of the others. In ordinary circumstances, particularly in the case of a periodical work, we might not deem it strictly proper, to make the successive volumes of a series the subject of our remarks. Supposing, however, the *American Annual Register* not yet to have reached a

circulation, to make it wholly independent of the usual means of recommending new works to the notice of the public, and considering it highly important that this work should be liberally sustained, we have felt it a duty to call the attention of our readers to its merits.

This volume comprehends the political history of two years, and is to be followed by an additional volume, containing the public documents, law proceedings, and biographies for the same period. This departure from the strictness of the plan of an *Annual Register* is stated by the conductor, to have been caused partly by private considerations, although regarded by him as justified by the peculiar character of the events, which transpired during the two years embraced in the volume. We are not at all disposed to question the weight of the private considerations alluded to, nor to murmur at the delay. Neither do we deny that the history of 1828 and 1829, both domestic and foreign, may, in its leading events, be very conveniently written at once. We also look forward with interest to the supplementary volume, which is promised us in the course of the present season. We are, however, of the opinion, that on the punctual appearance of a volume each year, containing, in due proportion, all the matter pertaining to that year, the success of this work will mainly depend. Without this, the publication may be valuable, but it will not be an *Annual Register*. It will be a departure from that plan, which experience has shown to be admirably adapted to the end proposed; and which probably possesses advantages over any other, which, being in substance the same, should in form be considerably different. We forbear to enlarge on the topic, although we deem it one, in which the prosperity of the work is involved, because it could not be pursued without apparent disparagement of the present volume and of that which is expected to complete the two years.

Of the historical portion of this volume, about twice as much is devoted to Europe and the States of this Continent south of our Union, as is devoted to the United States. We are not disposed to apportion numerically the number of pages, to which the domestic and foreign history of the year are severally entitled. Circumstances will of course, at different times, suggest greater fullness in the different chapters of each. We are inclined to think it desirable, however, that the portion devoted to the United States of America should be at least as

ample as all the rest put together. The work is unquestionably looked to as an *American Annual Register*. The foreign portion of this work has been hitherto, and is, in the present volume, exceedingly well executed ; a good deal better than the corresponding—that is, the foreign part of the *English Annual Register*. Still, however, the last named work, the French *Annuaire*, and other European publications may be depended on to furnish a satisfactory account of foreign history and politics. But none of them can for us, in any degree, supply the place of an *American Annual Register*, in the account of our own politics. More than once the *English Annual Register*, under the head of the History of the United States, has done nothing but gather up the libellous trash of our own daily partisan prints, embodied into a form fit, and, it would seem, designed for no higher purpose, than to be quoted back into our papers as the judgment of foreigners in respect to our domestic politics. Besides this, it is notorious, that foreigners cannot or will not comprehend America. We want, therefore, both for the instruction of Europe and for reference at home, a full and comprehensive history of our own political year. This part of the work will of course be the most attractive to the foreign reader ; and though, on the first impression, the contrary may be supposed, it will be the most interesting even in the United States. A far larger portion of readers will be gratified and instructed by a well-digested and ample narrative of our own affairs, than by the most finished chapter on England, France, or Russia. It must not be supposed, that what is familiar to the conductor of the work, whose attention is systematically turned to the collection of its materials, will, therefore, be trite to the mass of the community. A good portion of its contents will be positively new to them ; and what was known before will serve to give additional interest to the narrative. Nothing pleases most readers more than a full and connected account of an interesting subject, with which they have already a partial acquaintance. The actors in our domestic annals are all of them men well known in some part of the country—some of them well known in every part. The transactions, in which they are concerned, relating to our common country and to passing interests, will be read by many, who would grow weary over the bulletins of a campaign in distant regions, filled with the exploits of men they never heard of before. We wish also as much extension as

possible given to the chapters on the separate States. There is generally in each of the States some important or curious legislation, and some contribution toward the permanent and essential history of the country. This part of the work, we are fully aware, will be the most difficult to prepare. There is no convenient official source, like the journals of Congress, from which it can be derived. It must be sought in newspapers, and not in a small number of them. We believe, however, that the pains and diligence, bestowed on this part of the work, would be amply rewarded in its increased value. Some States might be dismissed more readily than others; and the State, which presented very important matter one year, might be summarily despatched the next. But the chapters devoted to them, if carefully elaborated, would be those perused with most interest by the mass of the readers of the work. Considerable care must be used in assigning to different States their relative portion of the pages of the work, according to the interest likely to be felt throughout the country, in the various topics treated under each head. Thus an abstract of the Revised Code of New York occupies seventy pages of the present volume, and the proceedings of South Carolina on the subject of Nullification, are comprehended in two pages. This perhaps is about the due share of each, in a philosophic aspect of the importance of the respective topics. But in an Annual Register of the politics and history of the country, something might have been retrenched from one article and added to the other. We refer to these instances, however, rather in the way of illustration, to explain our meaning, than of fault-finding. The chapters on American history contain the principal incidents in the legislation of the twentieth Congress, and the chief occurrences in the two last years of the late administration. They are related with as much moderation as can be brought to such topics by any person entertaining opinions of his own. There is no partisan violence in relating events and characterising measures, in which the author must have felt deeply, and in which he knew the public felt as deeply as himself. This moderation of tone belongs to the dignity of historical narrative, and in adopting it, the conductor of the Register has shown that he is alive to the elevated character of his work. Considered as a publication intended for perusal abroad, we deem this a very important part of its merits. Although licentiousness is inseparable from a free press, the fero-

city of our electioneering discussions has injured us essentially in the judgment of enlightened Europe. It is true, our brethren in England can say but little on this topic, for their press is as licentious as our own, though in a much narrower sphere; but the condition of the political press, in free countries, is already quoted as the justification of its restraint by the arbitrary governments of the continent.

We consider the Editor of this volume of the Register as having done wisely, in abstaining, in a good degree, from the insertion of debates in Congress. As nothing like even a fair specimen of the speeches of the two houses could be given, without unduly occupying the pages of the Register, we conceive it every way better (though otherwise perhaps contemplated in the original plan of the work) to confine the account of congressional proceedings to the history of their progress through the stages of legislation, and a general view of the arguments, by which they are supported and opposed. All else must be left to a *Register of Debates*—a work of prime necessity in the political literature of the country. We had hoped that the spirited commencement, which was made by Messrs. Gales & Seaton, a few years ago, would, under a liberal public and private patronage, have resulted in the permanent establishment of such a work. The private patronage, we regret to hear, has not been commensurate with the acknowledged importance of the undertaking, and the public subscription, if we are not misinformed, has been withdrawn. It will be a matter of just regret should these circumstances cause the suspension of a work of very high importance to the legislation of the country. We yet hope that there will be found enough of public and private liberality to warrant not merely the continuation of the work, which was commenced in 1825, but the collection of the congressional debates from the adoption of the Constitution.

To return to the American Annual Register, we must repeat the opinion that it is a publication richly entitled to patronage. It is essential to the well-instructed politician and the enlightened general reader. It ought to have a place in all our public and social libraries; and in the collections of individuals, who study the history of their country and of their age. It is in its nature a work of growing value. The series of volumes will constitute a repository not to be dispensed with, the importance of which will be out of proportion to that of the

single volumes, of which it is composed. It is capable of being made, we fully believe, the most popular periodical work published in the country. It would richly repay the time and attention of any conductor, however gifted and respectable. And in exhorting the accomplished gentleman, who is understood hitherto to have presided over its preparation, to persevere in this honorable pursuit, and to make it more and more an object of his studies and labors, we believe we consult the interest of the reading public, as well as his own reputation. If the authority of a name be wanted to stamp a character on the work, let him be reminded, that he is executing a plan, which was first projected by Burke, and for years occupied no small portion of his time.

ART. II.—1. *Fuersten und Voelker von Sued-Europa im Sechszehnten und Siebzehnten Jahrhundert, vornehmlich aus ungedruckten Gesandtschafts-Berichten.* VON LEOPOLD RANKE. [Princes and Nations of the South of Europe in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, compiled principally from the Reports of Ambassadors. By LEOPOLD VON RANKE.] Hamburg. 1827.

2. *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches aus den Quellen.* VON JOSEPH VON HAMMER. [History of the Ottoman Empire, from Original Sources. By JOSEPH VON HAMMER.] Perth. 1827.

3. *Des Osmanischen Reichs Staatsverfassung und Staatsverwaltung von Demselben.* [Constitution and Administration of the Ottoman Empire. By the same.] Vienna. 1827.

We have recently seen a great empire, which but a few centuries ago, threatened to extend its dominion over all the European continent, preserved from entire ruin only by the relations of its victorious invader with other powers. The terror, which that empire formerly inspired, is proved by the well-known fact, that prayers for the destruction of the Turks are still to be found in the litanies of some of the German churches. It may not be uninteresting to inquire, in what manner, and by what means, so extraordinary a change has been produced in so short a period ; and we shall endeavor in